

Our online eEdition has the latest coverage of the House action on the articles of impeachment against President Trump.



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Court rules part of Obama's health care law invalid

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS

The “individual mandate” of former President Barack Obama’s health care law is invalid, but other parts of the law need further review, a federal appeals court ruled Wednesday.

The 2-1 ruling handed down by a panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans largely side-stepped what happens to some of the most popular parts of the Affordable Care Act such as protections for those with pre-existing conditions, Medicaid expansion and the ability for children under the age of 26 to remain on their parents insurance.

The panel agreed with Texas-based U.S. District Judge Reed O’Connor’s 2018 finding that the law’s insurance requirement, the so-called “individual mandate,” was rendered unconstitutional when Congress, in 2017, reduced a tax on people without insurance to zero.

The court reached no decision on the big issue – how much of the Affordable Care Act must fall along with the insurance mandate. The Act has remained in place while the question of its future has been litigated in court.

“It may still be that none of the ACA is severable from the individual mandate, even after this inquiry is concluded. It may be that all of the ACA is severable from the individual mandate. It may also be that some of the ACA is severable from the individual mandate, and some is not,” Judge Jennifer Elrod wrote.

In dissent, Judge Carolyn Dineen King said her colleagues were prolonging “uncertainty over the future of the healthcare sector.” King would have found the mandate constitutional, although unenforceable, and would have left the rest of the law alone.

“Without any enforcement mechanism to speak of, ques-

SEE HEALTH CARE, 2A

House debates case for impeachment into night



AP

“Today we are here to defend democracy for the people,” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California said Wednesday as the House of Representatives began a debate on the articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump.

BY LISA MASCARO
AND MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON

The U.S. House marched on Wednesday toward historic nighttime votes to impeach President Donald Trump, split as severely as the nation over the conduct of the 45th American president but all but certain to approve the charges against him and send them to the Senate for trial.

Trump, accused of abusing his presidential power when he asked Ukraine to investigate his political rival ahead of the 2020 election and then obstructing Congress’ investigation, would be just the third American president to be impeached, leaving a lasting stain on his tenure at the White House.

Ahead of the vote, Speaker Nancy Pelosi invoked the the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble to the Constitution in arguing that the Founders’ vision for a republic was threatened by Trump’s actions.

“Today we are here to defend democracy for the people,” she said to applause from Democrats in the House chamber.

Trump, tweeting from the White House, used all capital letters and exclamation points to register his outrage: “SUCH ATROCIOUS LIES BY THE RADICAL LEFT, DO NOTHING DEMOCRATS. THIS IS AN ASSAULT ON AMERICA, AND AN ASSAULT ON THE REPUBLICAN PARTY!!!!”

The impeachment effort, unfolding over weeks and then a long final day of debate, has divided the lawmakers in Congress much the way Americans have different views of Trump’s unusual presidency and the articles of impeachment against him. Yet the outcome was not in doubt.

According to a tally compiled by The Associated Press, a clear House majority of Democrats was ready to vote to impeach. No Republicans were expected to join them as the GOP stands by its president.

Next comes a January trial in the Senate, where a vote of two-thirds would be necessary for conviction. While Democrats have the majority in the House to impeach Trump, Republicans control the Senate, and few if any are expected to diverge from plans to acquit the presi-

dent of the charges in the new year ahead of early state primary voting.

As the House debated ground rules for the final debate, Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., chairman of the Rules Committee, said, “This is a democracy-defining moment.” He said, “This is about protecting our democracy.”

Republicans rose to the president’s defense.

Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia warned that the Founders were just as concerned about a purely partisan impeachment, as this one was on track to become, wielded by the power of a majority party.

“This is not a solemn occasion,” he mocked the Democrats’ statements. “You’ve been wanting to do this ever since the gentleman was elected.”

Trump, who was heading for a campaign rally in the election battleground state of Michigan, has implored Americans to “read the transcript,” but the facts of his July phone call with the Ukraine president that sparked the impeachment inquiry have been largely confirmed by the White House memo of the conversation and

witnesses in impeachment hearings.

Trump asked Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate Democrats and his 2020 political rival Joe Biden. At the time, the newly elected Ukraine leader was hoping for a coveted White House visit to showcase his standing with the U.S., his country’s most important ally. He was also counting on nearly \$400 million in military aid as his country confronted its hostile neighbor, Russia.

The House impeachment resolution says that Trump abused the power of his office and then tried to obstruct the investigation in Congress like “no president” in history.

The president “betrayed the nation by abusing his high office to enlist a foreign power in corrupting democratic elections,” it said. “President Trump, by such conduct, has demonstrated that he will remain a threat to national security and the Constitution if allowed to remain in office.”

The question for lawmakers was whether those were impeachable offenses.

SEE IMPEACHMENT, 8A

What does NC Lt Governor do? Who's running in 2020?

BY DAWN BAUMGARTNER
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RALEIGH

With just days left to file to run in the 2020 election, one statewide office has enough candidates for a basketball game. So far, 14 people are running for lieutenant governor.

Incumbent Lt. Gov. Dan Forest, a Republican, is running for governor and couldn’t seek

another term anyway, because there’s a two-term limit.

It’s a crowded candidate field among both parties for an office that doesn’t come with as much power as people might think.

It does come with a six-figure salary — the same pay as eight other executive-branch positions that are likewise elected statewide and separately from the governor, collectively known as the Council of State. The lieutenant governor presides over

the Senate but doesn’t make committee appointments or present bills. And while many seek the office because they have higher aspirations beyond it, there’s no guarantee the lieutenant governor’s office is the way to get there.

But it can be.

It was for former Gov. Bev Perdue, a Democrat, who served first as lieutenant governor. The word “lieutenant” means “place-holding.” The lieutenant governor is there in case the governor is unable to carry out his or her duties. And the lieutenant governor can vote in the Senate — but only to break a tie.

After Perdue took office as lieutenant governor in 2001, she quickly found that it was much different than her previous role in the General Assembly as a head of the powerful Appropri-

ations Committee, which controls the budget.

“I moved to the lieutenant governor’s office and overnight, I realized I had lost everything I had been able to build in a 10-15 year career in the legislature. And someone came in my office and said, ‘Yeah, Bev, that’s what this role is,’” Perdue said in a phone interview with The News & Observer. “You have no control, and you might as well admit that going into it. The day I went into the office was the day I realized who I was in the legislature was not who I could be in the executive branch.”

Leaving the legislature to run for higher office can mean risking a comfortable seat. Three of the current lieutenant governor candidates now serve as state lawmakers. If you’re not a risk-taker, you don’t belong in poli-

tics — or business or education, either, Perdue said.

She was also told that it was the “kiss of death” to try to become governor after being lieutenant governor.

She served two terms — the limit — as lieutenant governor before winning the gubernatorial race in 2008, then serving one term.

WHO'S RUNNING FOR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

As of Wednesday, two days before the deadline to file for office, 14 candidates have filed for the race and State Superintendent Mark Johnson announced he would file on Wednesday.

Democrats:
● N.C. Rep. Chaz Beasley of

SEE CANDIDATES, 2A

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